



# NEWS FROM NOAA

NATIONAL OCEANIC & ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION • US DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

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## **NOAA Renews Partnership with The Nature Conservancy: Works with Northwest Communities to Restore Coastal Habitats**

NOAA has teamed up once again with The Nature Conservancy to preserve America's valuable coastal resources. The new three-year partnership will build on past successes protecting coastal and marine habitat, while engaging local communities through volunteer and educational opportunities.

NOAA's Restoration Center has awarded \$800,000 nationally in the first year to fund the restoration of fish and shellfish habitat in 14 innovative projects that stretch from the California shores to the oyster beds of New England and Florida. NOAA has awarded \$172,523 for projects in the Northwest. NOAA staff collaborated with TNC during the project selection process and will provide technical expertise and oversight through the life of the partnership.

"America's rich history began with early settlers building their communities on the wealth of marine resources available along our coasts and rivers," said William T. Hogarth, director of NOAA Fisheries Service. "These projects will help rebuild oyster reefs, open rivers for sturgeon and salmon and restore habitat for oysters and other shellfish. They will improve the environment and benefit the economies of local communities."

In the Alaskan and Pacific Northwest regions, the following four projects were selected to receive partnership support. In addition to the NOAA award, TNC's Global Marine Initiative will provide a matching award:

### **Restoring Colter Creek Fish Passage, Alaska \$65,000**

TNC is working with private landowners to replace undersized culverts in order to improve fish passage and enhance fish habitat on Colter Creek, Alaska, a tributary of the Little Susitna. The four culverts prevent upstream passage for juvenile Coho and Chinook salmon and contribute to the degradation of the stream function and surrounding shoreline habitat. Enhancing fish passage and habitat in Colter Creek can help salmon be more resilient.

### **Restoring Harris Creek Watershed: Fubar Creek, Alaska \$22,523**

TNC and the U.S. Forest Service are collaborating to improve salmon habitat in Fubar Creek through the placement of large woody debris, which provides refuge and creates rearing habitat for juvenile fish, and stream stabilization. Fubar Creek has been specified by the state of Alaska as important to a variety of fish species including pink, coho, and chum salmon as well as steelhead and cutthroat trout. The project will increase available year-round rearing habitat for juvenile fish within the floodplain and mainstem of the creek. Re-establishing the health of the Fubar Creek system will improve the productivity of surrounding lands and the organisms inhabiting these areas.

## **Restoring Native Oysters in Liberty Bay, Washington**

**\$40,000**

TNC and the Puget Sound Restoration Fund are teaming up to expand the footprint of native Olympia oyster reefs in Liberty Bay, a small sub-estuary within Puget Sound, by re-creating a functional, self-sustaining native oyster bed in the lower intertidal zone and re-establishing the many ecosystem services it provides. While the project site itself will be off limits to public harvest, successful restoration of the West Coast's only native oyster will provide a continual source of seed for oysters in nearby areas, where public harvest may one day be re-established.

## **Restoring Olympia Oysters in Netarts Bay, Oregon**

**\$45,000**

The 2007 restoration project builds upon past successes through one of the first efforts to restore native shellfish in Oregon. NOAA and TNC plan to continue the restoration of Olympia oysters in Netarts Bay through the addition of oyster spat to suitable habitats. Local conservation organizations and volunteers will participate in habitat enhancement activities and in transplanting juvenile oyster spat to the project site. Commercial oyster growers will also play a key role in the project by providing expertise on the ecology of the bay

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, an agency of the U.S. Commerce Department, is celebrating 200 years of science and service to the nation. From the establishment of the Survey of the Coast in 1807 by Thomas Jefferson to the formation of the Weather Bureau and the Commission of Fish and Fisheries in the 1870s, much of America's scientific heritage is rooted in NOAA.

NOAA is dedicated to enhancing economic security and national safety through the prediction and research of weather and climate-related events and information service delivery for transportation, and by providing environmental stewardship of our nation's coastal and marine resources. Through the emerging Global Earth Observation System of Systems (GEOSS), NOAA is working with its federal partners, more than 70 countries and the European Commission to develop a global monitoring network that is as integrated as the planet it observes, predicts and protects.

NOAA Fisheries Service is dedicated to protecting and preserving our nation's living marine resources and their habitat through scientific research, management and enforcement. NOAA Fisheries Service provides effective stewardship of these resources for the benefit of the nation, supporting coastal communities that depend upon them, and helping to provide safe and healthy seafood to consumers and recreational opportunities for the American public. To learn more about NOAA Fisheries Service, please visit: [www.nmfs.noaa.gov](http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov).

NOAA's Community-based Restoration Program (CRP), a financial and technical assistance program within the NOAA Fisheries Office of Habitat Conservation, promotes strong partnerships at the national, regional and local level to fund grassroots, community-based activities. The NOAA-funded projects provide strong on-the-ground habitat restoration components that offer educational and social benefits for people and their communities in addition to long-term ecological benefits for fishery resources. More information about CRP can be found at <http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/habitat/restoration>.

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On the Web:

NOAA: <http://www.noaa.gov>

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